

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (*Currently Amended*) A process for signaling cost information in a telecommunications network comprised of a plurality of exchanges, wherein the process comprises:

establishing a connection between a subscriber's terminal and an exchange of the plurality of exchanges,

forwarding a tariff request for a to-be-completed telephone call or an on-going telephone call from a call handling function resident in the exchange to an independent tariff server, wherein the tariff server is connected to several of the exchanges comprising the telecommunications network and receives tariff requests from the exchanges,

receiving a tariff response at the call handling function at the exchange from the tariff server for the requested connection,

forwarding the tariff response from the call handling function to a CDR generating function in the exchange,

forwarding current cost information from the CDR generating function to the cost communication function of the exchange, and

communicating the current cost information from the cost communication function to the subscriber's terminal prior to the establishment of the to-be-completed telephone call or during the on-going telephone call, wherein the exchange forwards the current cost information to a bill

server and the bill server updates a subscriber database resident on the tariff server with the received current cost information.

2. *(Previously Presented)* The process for signaling cost information according to Claim 1, wherein the tariff server accesses a subscriber database containing current tariff data.

3. *(Currently Amended)* The process for signaling cost information according to Claim 1, wherein the tariff response ~~current cost information is updated upon the connection establishment of the to-be-completed telephone call and/or during the existing on-going telephone call.~~

4. *(Cancelled).*

5. *(Currently Amended)* An independent tariff server coupled to a plurality of exchanges and to a bill server, the independent tariff server comprising a charging rate function which is connected to a subscriber database and receiving tariff requests from the plurality of exchanges, and, in response to a tariff request that is received from one of the exchanges of the plurality of exchanges for a to-be-completed telephone call or an on-going telephone call, the charging rate function generates a tariff response that is used to determine the current cost information of the to-be-completed telephone call or the on-going telephone call, wherein the bill server updates the subscriber database with the current cost information that is generated by the one exchange and forwarded to the bill server.

6. *(Cancelled)*.

7. *(Currently Amended)* An exchange for signaling cost information in a telecommunications network comprised of a plurality of exchanges, wherein the exchange comprises:

a call handling function that forwards a tariff request to an independent tariff server coupled to the exchange and to other exchanges in the plurality of exchanges, and the tariff server receives tariff requests from the other exchanges, wherein the call handling function receives the tariff response that is returned from the tariff server in response to the tariff request,

a CDR generating function that receives the tariff response from the call handling function and generates current cost information from the tariff response, and

a cost communication function that communicates the current cost information from the cost communication function to a subscriber's terminal, wherein the exchange forwards the current cost information to a bill server and the bill server updates a subscriber database resident on the tariff server with the received current cost information.

8. *(Currently Amended)* The exchange according to Claim 7, wherein the CDR generating function updates the current cost information upon the establishment of a to-be-completed telephone call.

9. (*Currently Amended*) The exchange according to Claim 7, wherein the CDR generating function updates the current cost information during the pendency of an on-going telephone call.

10. (*Cancelled*).

11. (*Currently Amended*) The tariff server according to Claim 5[[6]], wherein the tariff response ~~current cost information~~ is updated during the existing on-going telephone call ~~based upon cost information received from the charging rate function.~~

12. (*Cancelled*).

13. (*New*) The process for signaling cost information according to Claim 1, wherein the current cost information or the current tariff data for a subscriber is accessed from a terminal coupled to the subscriber database.

14. (*New*) The process for signaling cost information according to Claim 1, wherein service provider accesses the subscriber database to update the current tariff data for a subscriber.

15. (*New*) The tariff server according to Claim 5, wherein the tariff server accesses the subscriber database containing current tariff data for a subscriber to generate the tariff response.

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16. *(New)* The tariff server according to Claim 5, wherein the current cost information or the current tariff data for a subscriber is accessed from a terminal coupled to the subscriber database.

17. *(New)* The tariff server according to Claim 5, wherein service provider accesses the subscriber database to update the current tariff data for a subscriber.

18. *(New)* The exchange according to Claim 7, wherein the exchange receives an updated tariff response is updated during an on-going telephone call